



February 2, 2007

SENATE BILL No. 191

DIGEST OF SB 191 (Updated January 31, 2007 1:21 pm - DI 104)

Citations Affected: IC 4-23; IC 36-2.

Synopsis: Coroner issues. Prohibits disturbing a body, any evidence, and the scene of death until the coroner has photographed the body and law enforcement and the coroner have finished their investigation. Requires the coroner to positively identify a dead person by one of four specified methods. Requires the Indiana law enforcement academy (academy) to create and offer an introductory training course and an annual training course for coroners and deputy coroners. Provides that the courses must include instruction regarding death investigation, crime scenes, and preservation of evidence at a crime scene for police and crime lab technicians. Requires the academy to consult with the coroners training board and a pathologist in creating the training courses. Requires each coroner and each deputy coroner to successfully complete: (1) the introductory training course; and (2) the annual training course. Provides that a coroner's or deputy coroner's paycheck shall be withheld for failing to successfully complete the introductory training course or the annual training course. Provides that a coroner's paycheck shall be withheld for failing to release a written report or full autopsy report. Requires specified autopsy reports to be released to certain entities. (The introduced version of this bill was prepared by the interim committee on criminal justice matters.)

Effective: July 1, 2007.

Miller

January 23, 2007, read first time and referred to Committee on Health and Provider Services.

February 1, 2007, amended, reported favorably — Do Pass.

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February 2, 2007

First Regular Session 115th General Assembly (2007)

PRINTING CODE. Amendments: Whenever an existing statute (or a section of the Indiana Constitution) is being amended, the text of the existing provision will appear in this style type, additions will appear in **this style type**, and deletions will appear in ~~this style type~~.

Additions: Whenever a new statutory provision is being enacted (or a new constitutional provision adopted), the text of the new provision will appear in **this style type**. Also, the word **NEW** will appear in that style type in the introductory clause of each SECTION that adds a new provision to the Indiana Code or the Indiana Constitution.

Conflict reconciliation: Text in a statute in *this style type* or ~~this style type~~ reconciles conflicts between statutes enacted by the 2006 Regular Session of the General Assembly.

SENATE BILL No. 191

A BILL FOR AN ACT to amend the Indiana Code concerning local government.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Indiana:

1 SECTION 1. IC 4-23-6.5-7 IS AMENDED TO READ AS
2 FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2007]: Sec. 7. The board shall
3 adopt rules under IC 4-22-2 for the following:

4 (1) Standards for continuing education and training for county
5 coroners, **including education and training requirements set**
6 **forth in IC 36-2-14.**

7 (2) Mandatory training and continuing education requirements for
8 deputy coroners, **including education and training**
9 **requirements set forth in IC 36-2-14.**

10 (3) Minimum requirements for continuing education instructors
11 approved by the board.

12 (4) The necessary administration of this chapter.

13 SECTION 2. IC 4-23-6.5-10 IS ADDED TO THE INDIANA CODE
14 AS A **NEW** SECTION TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE JULY
15 1, 2007]: **Sec. 10. The board shall consult with the Indiana law**
16 **enforcement academy under IC 36-2-14-22(c)(1) concerning**
17 **criminal investigations in the creation of:**

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(1) the training course for coroners and deputy coroners under IC 36-2-14-22(a); and

(2) the annual training course for coroners and deputy coroners under IC 36-2-14-22(b).

SECTION 3. IC 36-2-14-6 IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2007]: Sec. 6. (a) Whenever the coroner is notified that a person in the county:

(1) has died from violence;

(2) has died by casualty;

(3) has died when apparently in good health;

(4) has died in an apparently suspicious, unusual, or unnatural manner; or

(5) has been found dead;

~~he~~ **the coroner** shall, before the scene of the death is disturbed, notify a law enforcement agency having jurisdiction in that area. The agency shall assist the coroner in conducting an investigation of how the person died and a medical investigation of the cause of death.

(b) The coroner shall file with the person in charge of interment a coroner's certificate of death within seventy-two (72) hours after being notified of the death. If the cause of death is not established with reasonable certainty within seventy-two (72) hours, the coroner shall file with the person in charge of interment a coroner's certificate of death, with the cause of death designated as "deferred pending further action". As soon as ~~he~~ **the coroner** determines the cause of death, the coroner shall file a supplemental report indicating ~~his~~ **the** exact findings with the local health officer having jurisdiction, who shall make it part of ~~his~~ **the health officer's** official records.

(c) If this section applies, the body and the scene of death may not be disturbed until:

(1) the coroner has photographed them in the manner that most fully discloses how the person died; and

(2) law enforcement and the coroner have finished their initial assessment of the scene of death.

However, a coroner or law enforcement officer may order a body to be moved before photographs are taken if the position or location of the body unduly interferes with activities carried on where the body is found, but the body may not be moved from the immediate area and must be moved without substantially destroying or altering the evidence present.

(d) When acting under this section, if the coroner considers it necessary to have an autopsy performed, is required to perform an autopsy under subsection (f), or is requested by the prosecuting

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attorney of the county to perform an autopsy, the coroner shall employ a physician:

- (1) certified by the American Board of Pathology; or
- (2) holding an unlimited license to practice medicine in Indiana and acting under the direction of a physician certified by the American Board of Pathology;

to perform the autopsy. The physician performing the autopsy shall be paid a fee of at least fifty dollars (\$50) from the county treasury. A coroner may employ the services of the medical examiner system, provided for in IC 4-23-6-6, when an autopsy is required, as long as this subsection is met.

(e) If:

- (1) at the request of:

- (A) the decedent's spouse;
- (B) a child of the decedent, if the decedent does not have a spouse;
- (C) a parent of the decedent, if the decedent does not have a spouse or children;
- (D) a brother or sister of the decedent, if the decedent does not have a spouse, children, or parents; or
- (E) a grandparent of the decedent, if the decedent does not have a spouse, children, parents, brothers, or sisters;

- (2) in any death where two (2) or more witnesses who corroborate the circumstances surrounding death are present; and

- (3) two (2) physicians who are licensed to practice medicine in the state and who have made separate examinations of the decedent certify the same cause of death in an affidavit within twenty-four (24) hours after death;

an autopsy need not be performed. The affidavits shall be filed with the circuit court clerk.

(f) A county coroner may not certify the cause of death in the case of the sudden and unexpected death of a child who is at least one (1) week old and not more than three (3) years old unless an autopsy is performed at county expense. However, a coroner may certify the cause of death of a child described in this subsection without the performance of an autopsy if subsection (e) applies to the death of the child.

SECTION 4. IC 36-2-14-6.5 IS ADDED TO THE INDIANA CODE AS A NEW SECTION TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2007]: **Sec. 6.5. (a) As used in this section, "DNA analysis" means an identification process in which the unique genetic code of an individual that is carried by the individual's deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) is compared to genetic codes carried in DNA found in bodily**

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substance samples obtained by a law enforcement agency in the exercise of the law enforcement agency's investigative function.

(b) As used in this section, "immediate family member" means, with respect to a particular dead person, an individual who is at least eighteen (18) years of age and who is one (1) of the following:

- (1) The dead person's spouse.
- (2) The dead person's child.
- (3) The dead person's parent.
- (4) The dead person's grandparent.
- (5) The dead person's sibling.

(c) The coroner shall make a positive identification of a dead person unless extraordinary circumstances described in subsection (d) exist. In making a positive identification, the coroner shall determine the identity of a dead person by one (1) of the following methods:

- (1) Fingerprint identification.
- (2) DNA analysis.
- (3) Dental record analysis.
- (4) Positive identification by at least one (1) of the dead person's immediate family members if the dead person's body is in a physical condition that would allow for the dead person to be reasonably recognized.

(d) For the purposes of subsection (c), extraordinary circumstances exist if, after a thorough investigation, the coroner determines that identification of the dead person is not possible under any of the four (4) methods described in subsection (c).

SECTION 5. IC 36-2-14-18, AS AMENDED BY P.L.141-2006, SECTION 113, IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2007]: Sec. 18. (a) Notwithstanding IC 5-14-3-4(b)(1), when a coroner investigates a death, the office of the coroner is required to make available for public inspection and copying the following:

- (1) The name, age, address, sex, and race of the deceased.
- (2) The address where the dead body was found, or if there is no address the location where the dead body was found and, if different, the address where the death occurred, or if there is no address the location where the death occurred.
- (3) The name of the agency to which the death was reported and the name of the person reporting the death.
- (4) The name of any public official or governmental employee present at the scene of the death and the name of the person certifying or pronouncing the death.

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(5) Information regarding an autopsy (requested or performed) limited to the date, the person who performed the autopsy, where the autopsy was performed, and a conclusion as to:

- (A) the probable cause of death;
- (B) the probable manner of death; and
- (C) the probable mechanism of death.

(6) The location to which the body was removed, the person determining the location to which the body was removed, and the authority under which the decision to remove the body was made.

(7) The records required to be filed by a coroner under section 6 of this chapter and the verdict and the written report required under section 10 of this chapter.

(b) A county coroner or a coroner's deputy who receives an investigatory record from a law enforcement agency shall treat the investigatory record with the same confidentiality as the law enforcement agency would treat the investigatory record.

(c) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, a coroner shall make available a full copy of an autopsy report, other than a photograph, video recording, or audio recording of the autopsy, upon the written request of the next of kin of the decedent or of an insurance company investigating a claim arising from the death of the individual upon whom the autopsy was performed. The insurance company is prohibited from publicly disclosing any information contained in the report beyond that information that may otherwise be disclosed by a coroner under this section. This prohibition does not apply to information disclosed in communications in conjunction with the investigation, settlement, or payment of the claim.

(d) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, a coroner shall make available a full copy of an autopsy report, other than a photograph, video recording, or audio recording of the autopsy, upon the written request of:

- (1) the director of the division of disability and rehabilitative services established by IC 12-9-1-1;
- (2) the director of the division of mental health and addiction established by IC 12-21-1-1; or
- (3) the director of the division of aging established by IC 12-9.1-1-1;

in connection with a division's review of the circumstances surrounding the death of an individual who received services from a division or through a division at the time of the individual's death.

(e) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, a coroner shall make available a full copy of an autopsy report,

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including a photograph, a video recording, or an audio recording of the autopsy, to:

- (1) the department of child services established by IC 31-25-1-1, including an office of the department located in the county where the death occurred;
- (2) the statewide child fatality review committee established by IC 31-33-25-6; or
- (3) a county child fatality review team or regional child fatality review team established under IC 31-33-24-6 by the county or for the county where the death occurred;

for purposes of the entities described in subdivisions (1) through (3) conducting a review or an investigation of the circumstances surrounding the death of a child (as defined in IC 31-9-2-13(d)(1)) and making a determination whether the death of the child was a result of abuse, abandonment, or neglect.

SECTION 6. IC 36-2-14-22 IS ADDED TO THE INDIANA CODE AS A NEW SECTION TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2007]: Sec. 22. (a) The Indiana law enforcement academy, under the direction of the executive director appointed under IC 5-2-1-14, shall create and offer a training course for coroners and deputy coroners. The training course must include:

- (1) at least forty (40) hours of instruction; and
- (2) instruction regarding:
 - (A) death investigation;
 - (B) crime scenes; and
 - (C) preservation of evidence at a crime scene for police and crime lab technicians.

(b) The Indiana law enforcement academy shall create and offer an annual training course for coroners and deputy coroners. The annual training course must:

- (1) include at least eight (8) hours of instruction; and
- (2) cover recent developments in:
 - (A) death investigation;
 - (B) crime scenes; and
 - (C) preservation of evidence at a crime scene for police and crime lab technicians.

(c) In creating the courses under subsections (a) and (b), the Indiana law enforcement academy shall consult with:

- (1) the coroners training board established by IC 4-23-6.5-3 regarding the creation of the training courses; and
- (2) a pathologist certified by the American Board of Pathology regarding medical issues that are a part of the

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training courses.

(d) All training in the courses offered under subsections (a) and (b) that involves medical issues must be provided by a pathologist certified by the American Board of Pathology.

(e) All training in the courses offered under subsections (a) and (b) that involves crime scenes and evidence preservation must be provided by a law enforcement officer.

(f) The Indiana law enforcement academy shall issue a coroner or deputy coroner a certificate upon successful completion of the courses described in subsections (a) and (b).

SECTION 7. IC 36-2-14-23 IS ADDED TO THE INDIANA CODE AS A NEW SECTION TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2007]: Sec. 23. (a) Each coroner shall successfully complete the training course offered under section 22(a) of this chapter within six (6) months after taking office.

(b) Each deputy coroner shall successfully complete the training course offered under section 22(a) of this chapter within six (6) months after beginning employment with a coroner's office.

(c) Each coroner and each deputy coroner shall successfully complete the annual training course offered under section 22(b) of this chapter each year after the year in which the coroner or deputy coroner received the training required by section 22(a) of this chapter.

(d) After a coroner or deputy coroner has:

(1) successfully completed the training course as required under subsection (a) or (b); and

(2) successfully completed the annual training course as required under subsection (c);

the coroner or deputy coroner shall present a certificate or other evidence to the county executive, or in the case of a county that contains a consolidated city, the city-county council, that the coroner or deputy coroner has successfully completed the training required under subsection (a), (b), or (c).

(e) If a coroner or deputy coroner does not present a certificate or other evidence to the county executive, or in the case of a county that contains a consolidated city, the city-county council, that the coroner or deputy coroner has successfully completed the training required under subsection (a), (b), or (c), the county executive or city-county council shall order the auditor to withhold the paycheck of the coroner or deputy coroner until the coroner or deputy coroner satisfies the respective training requirements under subsections (a), (b), and (c).

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(f) If the county executive or city-county council orders an auditor to withhold a paycheck under subsection (e) and a coroner or deputy coroner later presents a certificate or other evidence to the county executive or city-county council that the coroner or deputy coroner has successfully completed training required under subsection (a), (b), or (c), the county executive or city-county council shall order the auditor to release all of the coroner's or deputy coroner's paychecks that were withheld from the coroner or deputy coroner.

SECTION 8. IC 36-2-14-24 IS ADDED TO THE INDIANA CODE AS A NEW SECTION TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2007]: Sec. 24. (a) Except as provided in subsection (b), if a coroner does not release:

(1) a written report required under section 10 of this chapter; or

(2) a full copy of an autopsy report required under section 18 of this chapter;

as required by law, the county executive, or in the case of a county containing a consolidated city, the city-county council, shall order the auditor to withhold the paycheck of the coroner until the coroner properly releases the written report or full autopsy report.

(b) A county auditor may not withhold the paycheck of a coroner if a coroner is legally prohibited from releasing a written report or from releasing a full autopsy report. However, a coroner is required to release a written report or full autopsy report as soon as possible after the legal prohibition on releasing the written report or full autopsy report ceases to exist.

(c) If the county executive or city-county council orders an auditor to withhold a paycheck under subsection (a) and a coroner properly releases the written report or full autopsy report, the county executive or city-county council shall order the auditor to release all of the coroner's paychecks that were withheld from the coroner.

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COMMITTEE REPORT

Madam President: The Senate Committee on Health and Provider Services, to which was referred Senate Bill No. 191, has had the same under consideration and begs leave to report the same back to the Senate with the recommendation that said bill be AMENDED as follows:

Page 2, line 28, delete ", any evidence,".

Page 2, line 33, delete "investigation" and insert **"initial assessment"**.

Page 4, between lines 26 and 27, begin a new paragraph and insert: "SECTION 5. IC 36-2-14-18, AS AMENDED BY P.L.141-2006, SECTION 113, IS AMENDED TO READ AS FOLLOWS [EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2007]: Sec. 18. (a) Notwithstanding IC 5-14-3-4(b)(1), when a coroner investigates a death, the office of the coroner is required to make available for public inspection and copying the following:

- (1) The name, age, address, sex, and race of the deceased.
- (2) The address where the dead body was found, or if there is no address the location where the dead body was found and, if different, the address where the death occurred, or if there is no address the location where the death occurred.
- (3) The name of the agency to which the death was reported and the name of the person reporting the death.
- (4) The name of any public official or governmental employee present at the scene of the death and the name of the person certifying or pronouncing the death.
- (5) Information regarding an autopsy (requested or performed) limited to the date, the person who performed the autopsy, where the autopsy was performed, and a conclusion as to:
 - (A) the probable cause of death;
 - (B) the probable manner of death; and
 - (C) the probable mechanism of death.
- (6) The location to which the body was removed, the person determining the location to which the body was removed, and the authority under which the decision to remove the body was made.
- (7) The records required to be filed by a coroner under section 6 of this chapter and the verdict and the written report required under section 10 of this chapter.

(b) A county coroner or a coroner's deputy who receives an investigatory record from a law enforcement agency shall treat the investigatory record with the same confidentiality as the law enforcement agency would treat the investigatory record.

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(c) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, a coroner shall make available a full copy of an autopsy report, other than a photograph, video recording, or audio recording of the autopsy, upon the written request of the next of kin of the decedent or of an insurance company investigating a claim arising from the death of the individual upon whom the autopsy was performed. The insurance company is prohibited from publicly disclosing any information contained in the report beyond that information that may otherwise be disclosed by a coroner under this section. This prohibition does not apply to information disclosed in communications in conjunction with the investigation, settlement, or payment of the claim.

(d) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, a coroner shall make available a full copy of an autopsy report, other than a photograph, video recording, or audio recording of the autopsy, upon the written request of:

- (1) the director of the division of disability and rehabilitative services established by IC 12-9-1-1;
- (2) the director of the division of mental health and addiction established by IC 12-21-1-1; or
- (3) the director of the division of aging established by IC 12-9.1-1-1;

in connection with a division's review of the circumstances surrounding the death of an individual who received services from a division or through a division at the time of the individual's death.

(e) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, a coroner shall make available a full copy of an autopsy report, including a photograph, a video recording, or an audio recording of the autopsy, to:

- (1) the department of child services established by IC 31-25-1-1, including an office of the department located in the county where the death occurred;**
- (2) the statewide child fatality review committee established by IC 31-33-25-6; or**
- (3) a county child fatality review team or regional child fatality review team established under IC 31-33-24-6 by the county or for the county where the death occurred;**

for purposes of the entities described in subdivisions (1) through (3) conducting a review or an investigation of the circumstances surrounding the death of a child (as defined in IC 31-9-2-13(d)(1)) and making a determination whether the death of the child was a result of abuse, abandonment, or neglect."

Page 5, between lines 18 and 19, begin a new paragraph and insert:



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"(f) The Indiana law enforcement academy shall issue a coroner or deputy coroner a certificate upon successful completion of the courses described in subsections (a) and (b).".

Page 5, line 29, delete "." and insert **"after the year in which the coroner or deputy coroner received the training required by section 22(a) of this chapter."**

Renumber all SECTIONS consecutively.

and when so amended that said bill do pass.

(Reference is to SB 191 as introduced.)

MILLER, Chairperson

Committee Vote: Yeas 9, Nays 1.

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